

Darin Weinberg.
Of Others Inside: Insanity, Addiction, and Belonging in America.

Forward by Bryan S. Turner.

Temple University Press, 2005, 248 pp.

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The blend of mental health and addiction issues has received increasing attention in recent years. In Canada, we have clear evidence of this in the release of the final report, *Out of the Shadows at Last*, of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology earlier this year. *Of Others Inside: Insanity, Addiction and Belonging in America* is testament of a parallel emphasis in the United States. Framed within a sociological perspective, Weinberg's book brazenly undertakes to explain the intersecting influences of mental disability, addiction and poverty. This is without doubt a complex, multi-faceted and daunting task, and one Weinberg succeeds at.

This text is intended for a graduate audience. In fact, it is written in a manner that mirrors the complexity of the issue under study. With that said, although the text is in-depth in nature, it simultaneously provides the reader with a clear understanding of its intent and variously synthesizes the multiple areas it covers. The simple way Weinberg has accomplished this is by outlining his text in two sections, prefaced with setting the stage for his study and concluding with an overview.

Weinberg is concerned with the nature of the relationship between mental illness, disadvantage and addiction. He is interested in the experience and management of mental health problems, specifically for the most impoverished and marginalized individuals in society. He argues that to gain an understanding, objectivism and subjectivism should not be regarded as contrary to one another. Rather, we need to know how mental illness is constructed as well as a reality of living. This is the foundation of Weinberg's conceptualization of "others inside". The source for understanding, according to Weinberg, is grounded in his conceptualization of the "other" and "others inside". These are central organizing concepts in the text.

The first section of the book provides historical insight into Weinberg's ethnographical research, which is the focus of section two. It follows the rise of the mental health and addictions (alcohol and illicit drugs) fields in America through to present day. He examines the transformation of mental illness/insanity and addiction from the management of the moral integrity of individuals to the control and punishment of 'others' – the poor and culturally marginalized. Setting this historical foundation relays the complex social history and human activities that together contributed to the creation of addiction and mental illness as the social products they are today.

In section two of the text, Weinberg examines two contemporary treatment programs state-mandated to serve homeless clients. He asked of the programs why, and how mental illness and addictions came to be socially constructed as manifest causes of human behaviour and experiences. Comprehensive ethnographic work was undertaken at both a residential centre and an outpatient centre that was modelled after it. He finds a difference in the two programs, with Canyon House exhibiting what Weinberg terms "right living" (insanity and addiction used as resources for explaining past conduct) while Twilights fosters tenable community living (insanity and addiction used to plan for the immediate future). Client empowerment was identified at the foundation of both

programs. It is here that the theoretical concept of “others inside” is put into practice.

This book will be of interest to many audiences, most specifically those interested in the topics of mental illness, addiction and economic disadvantage. However, the implications for this text extend beyond these fields as well as the sociological discipline in general. Weinberg’s approach to understanding can be applied to other equally complex fields of study. Similarly, the text offers a fascinating account of ethnographic research that would be of interest to the pure researcher.

Of Others Inside takes the reader on a historical journey combined with two empirical case studies. Ultimately Weinberg raises the question of where the associations between mental illness, addiction and homelessness are leading us as a society. The reader is left to face the punitive state of addiction, mental health and poverty that America is facing today. Equipped with understanding the complex history that integrates mental illness, addiction and poverty, and the damaging impacts, the obvious question for the reader is what does the future hold in light of the current broadening merger of the mental health and addictions fields? This is a question that requires serious attention on both sides of the Canada/US border.

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